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Music (from a violinist's perspective)

Sarina Schwarz

Nova Southeastern University

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Music

(from a violinist's perspective)

Sarina Schwartz

"I'm a violinist," you tell someone.

"Oh, how wonderful," they reply. "I used to play. Wish I had kept up with it."

But you know that's not true. I don't play violin, you think. I'm a violinist. There's a difference. And you don't wish you had "kept up with it." Because only the people who care enough about their music pursue it.

Music is many things.

Music is developing a new callus on the tip of your finger every week. It's practicing that one shift up to that one, annoyingly high C sharp over and over and still missing it.

Music is having uneven collarbones and shoulders from the weight of your violin. It's being slightly deaf in your left ear, because it's always right next to your f-hole.

Music is needing to explain what an f-hole is. (It's a small opening in the violin that is indeed shaped like an "f" and it helps the sound resonate louder, in case you were wondering, even though you probably weren't.)

Music is spending an hour on one song trying to figure out bowings only to have your teacher change them at your lessons. It's not getting the seat you want in orchestra or missing a note in a concert and, even though no one in the audience noticed, it haunts you.

Music is putting up with trumpets and trombones and their disgusting habits.

But all those things don't matter when you're playing. Because music is full of contrasts: funny and serious, light or dark, happy or sad, angry and calm, or all of them wrapped into one. It can make you cry one moment and make you want to dance and smile a few seconds later. When you play, it lifts you up and carries you away, and you experience a depth of emotion that you never knew possible.

Music is being at orchestra rehearsal for nine hours and enjoying every single second because this is what you love to do.

Because those are the only people who ever continue with music: Only people who don't care that they could be making a better living if they become a lawyer or a doctor, because what's the point if you're not doing what you love? You would rather lie down and die than lay down your instrument for good.

Because when you imagine what that must feel like, you imagine being unmade, being empty.

That is music.